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RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000888

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SE GRATION, S/USSES, AF A/S, AF/C, AF/E, DRL
NSC FOR MGAVIN
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [ODIP](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [CD](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: SUDANESE DIPLOMATIC POTPOURRI: CHADIAN REBELS,
HUMAN RIGHTS, AND DIPLOMATIC TRAVEL

REF: KHARTOUM 870

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Classified By: CDA Robert E. Whitehead for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary. Charge d'affaires (CDA) met with Ministry of Foreign Affairs Under Secretary Dr. Mutriff Sidiq on July 30 to review a range of issues. CDA requested information on the current location of Chadian rebel leaders in Sudan as well as the disposition of their forces, to which Mutriff replied he was not in the loop. He provided information on two Sudanese properties confiscated by the Government of Chad (GOC) and charged that there had been two recent Chadian Army (ANT) incursions into Sudan, one of which we have since confirmed with the United Nations/African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). Charge next raised the case of a Sudanese woman who is at risk of flogging for wearing pants. Other business items in the 30-minute meeting were progress on a child abduction case, an embassy problem with obtaining travel permits in a timely fashion, and GOS interest in the USG position on language in the United Nations Security Council (UNSCR) resolution on extension of the UNAMID mandate. Some of these same subjects came up in subsequent conversations with other GOS and UN officials. End Summary.

CHADIAN REBELS, RAIDS AND CONFISCATION

12. (C) Charge asked Mutriff for current information on the location of top Chadian rebel leaders based in Sudan, whether they were presently in Khartoum, and the disposition and location of their forces in the field. We remained interested in ensuring that both the GOC and GOS were meeting their ends of the bargain to stop proxy cross-border activities. Mutriff looked blank and claimed that he was unaware of this issue and had no up to date information. (Note. If true, this would indicate that GOS is keeping this issue very close hold, probably within the confines of the NISS and the Presidency. Dr. Mutriff comes from the intelligence side, is the National Congress Party (NCP) insider watchdog in the MFA, and is almost always in the loop. End note.) He suggested that CDA raise this issue with the General Director of NISS.

13. (C) Charge showed Mutriff July 30 press reports about cross border raids into Sudan from Chad and asked if he had details on these allegations. Mutriff responded that on July 28 the ANT and Sudanese rebels (presumably JEM) from Chad staged two attacks on a village on the Sudanese border 10 kilometers south of Kulbus (100 kilometers north of El

Geneina). He said the raiders came in 15 to 20 vehicles but found that nearly all the adults in the village were cultivating their fields. There were no casualties and the ANT force and its allies returned home. We have confirmed with UNAMID a reported ANT incursion into Arwa village on July 27. Troops in six APCs and 44 other military vehicles reportedly looted property, including 15 weapons, and kidnapped two soldiers, one from the Public Defense Force and one from the Central Reserve Police. The two were released following a request by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) but the ANT has not returned seized weaponry. Neither Mutruff nor UNAMID could supply a motive for the incursion.

¶4. (C) Charge asked if Mutruff could provide any further details on Sudanese properties in Chad reportedly confiscated by the GOC -- our queries in N'djamena had not confirmed that any properties had been taken. Mutruff said that the Sudanese Embassy in Chad received a letter from the GOC informing that a Sudanese school in N'djamena and a second in Abeche had been closed and were to be confiscated by the GOC. The Chadian Foreign Minister subsequently phoned the Sudanese Ambassador and told him to ignore the confiscation letter. To date no written GOC confirmation had followed.

WHO WEARS THE PANTS IN SUDAN?

¶5. (C) Charge presented Mutruff a sheath of articles from the international media on the case of Lubna Ahmed al-Hussein, a journalist and press officer at the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). She had been arrested with eight other women by police in an early July raid on a Khartoum cafe; subsequently, they were charged with breaching Islamic law due to their dress, which included wearing pants, and dancing in public with men (reftel). Several of the women received lashes as punishment. For her part, al-Hussein demanded a trial, then resigned from UNMIS and

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waived her UN immunity so that the case could be publicly resolved. Some Sudanese women's groups and newspapers have rallied to her defense, and the case has been adjourned until August 4. The Charge told Mutruff that the entire affair had been a public affairs embarrassment for Sudan and a blot on its human rights copybook. He advised that a rational cost/benefit analysis would indicate that the best course of action would be to drop the case and avoid future repetitions. Mutruff said he had already spoken with the al-Hussein's father in an attempt to resolve the case out of court. Charge repeated that it was not in the GOS interest to pursue such affairs.

TRAVEL AND VISITATIONS

¶6. (C) Charge noted that the US Embassy has recently encountered problems with travel permits to areas outside of Khartoum. Last week, three USAID staff did not receive permission to visit Darfur and were forced to postpone their mission. The Charge had not yet received a permit authorizing travel to Abyei as part of an Assessment and Evaluation Mission, and neither had a TDY staffer from Washington. Mutruff gave the usual song and dance -- the permit was to ensure our security in areas suffering unrest -- but said that he would speak with the MFA Director General about the problem. (The DG later phoned to say that Charge's permit was ready but apologized that TDY staffer's was not. He admitted that the MFA channels embassy travel requests to "the central authority," which we read to be the Ministry of Interior and NISS.) The conversation moved to brief discussion of a child abduction case and the visitation rights of the American citizen mother. Mutruff closed by expressing GOS surprise that the US was supporting UK language in the UNSCR on extension of the UNAMID mandate that condemned Sudan for its expulsion of 13 humanitarian group. Charge admitted that he had not details but said that he would inform himself.

OTHER ASIDES

17. In a following meeting with UNAMID JSR Rudolphe Adada, Charge asked about the removal of Chadian rebels forces from the border area. Adada said that some had moved back but "some of the forces are still there." He could not provide details on who and where. Charge encountered Minister of International Cooperation Tijani al Faidal as a national day reception and queried the minister -- who is from Darfur -- about the situation with the rebels there. Tijani said that he did not know but hoped that the USG could find a solution.

He lamented that the Sudanese approach to politics, international relations and even its economy was tactical. Saving face and gaining momentary advantage often counted for more than finding a real solution to problems at hand.

WHITEHEAD